PI ⁘ E£ÅCĻË

Trans-disciplinary platform for emerging art, design, research & activism
Helsinki (Finland) since 2002, active in international networks from 2003.. Now **#20Something**

從網絡到島嶼： Pixelache 的流動實驗

From Networks to Islands: The Fluid Experiments of Pixelache

23.12.2025

Umkt Xinfu Market, Taipei, TW.

Andrew Gryf Paterson

Association archivist; artist-organiser, curator, indepedent researcher based in Helsinki, FI.
andrew@pixelache.ac

2002-2011/2012-2024: **http://pixelache.ac** | New! 2025: **http://pixelache.com**

Facebook: @**pixelache** | Instagram: @**pixelache_helsinki** | Soundcloud: **pixelache**

PI E£ÅCḶË

Origin of festival name

The name '**Pikseliähky**' was originally found in a Finnish article that predicted new words which we would need in the future.

Pikseliähky (translated into English as 'Pixelache') was supposed to describe the feeling that results from an **overdose or excess of digital media content.**

This overdose can happen easily **if content is too monotonous** – which is the case if standards, formats, tools and design principles converge to a narrow set of options.

..

Later interpretations (with English version of word) focused more on the '**ache**'
of digital influence in everyday life, an 'ache' **to re-engage with non-digital interfaces and systems.**

Pixelache seeks **to challenge mainstream standards and conventions,**
not only related to media and technology, but of contemporary society in general

Origins in 2002

“The original goal was to create an informal event, with a low threshold for getting involved.

This is evident in the choice of the event name - in Finnish the name **'Pikseliähky' sounds quirky and playful, not stiff and institutional**.

An important inspiration for the event format were the gatherings of subcultures such as **demo-scene and hacker scene: people getting together for a long weekend of chatting, debating and partying together in a collegial spirit.**

The first edition featured workshops as well as

'time and space for working with pixels' and opportunities for some 'food & talk'”

(Juha Huuskonen, quote from 2022)

Koplata — meaning **“a gathering of diverse people and things.”**

(Antti Ahonen, quote from 2024)

Invitation to contribute own expertise & ideas, show off tools, projects, things-in-progress / process

pikseli

www.pixelache.ac/2002/index.html

INFO STUFF WHO? LINKS/ (FINNISH) LINKS/

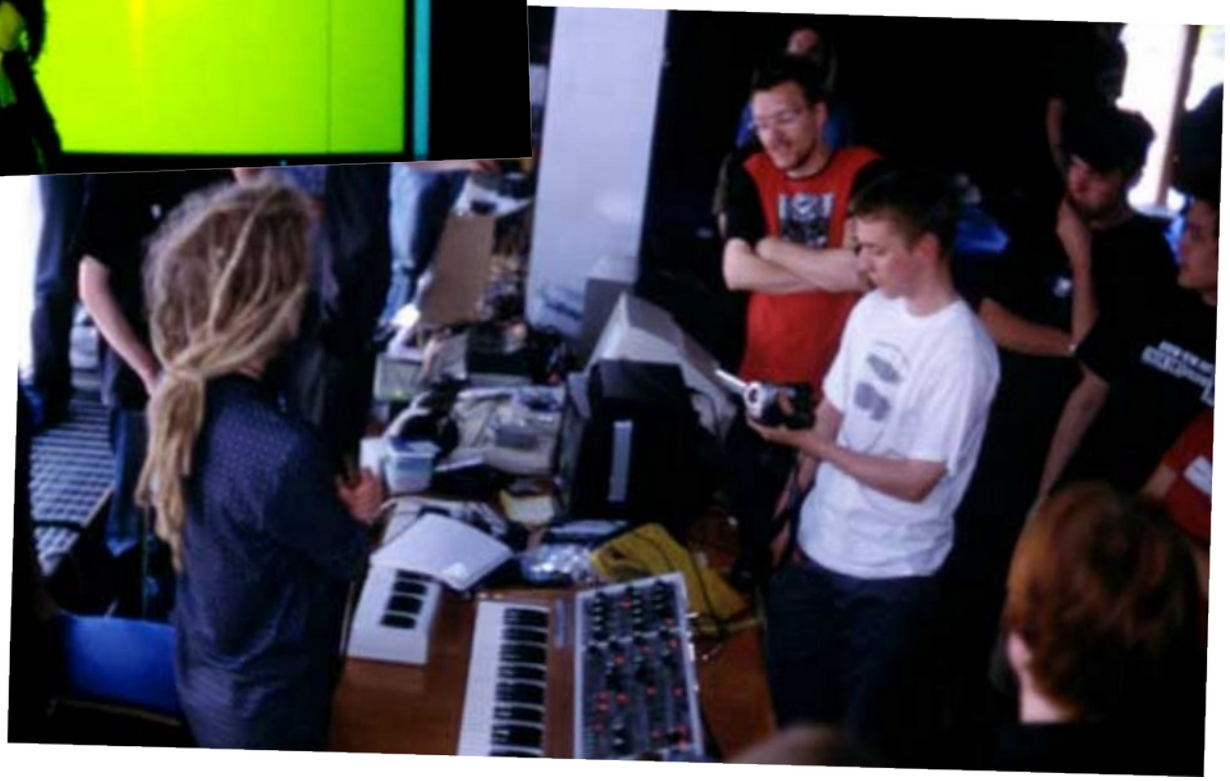
pikseliACHE, Helsinki 23-25.5

suomeksi

* audiovisual experiments and creative misuse of technology
* DIY lo-fi/hi-fi performances and installations
* the art of programming

pikseliÄHKY www.pixelache.a

Original **PikseliÄhky** event in Helsinki, 2002

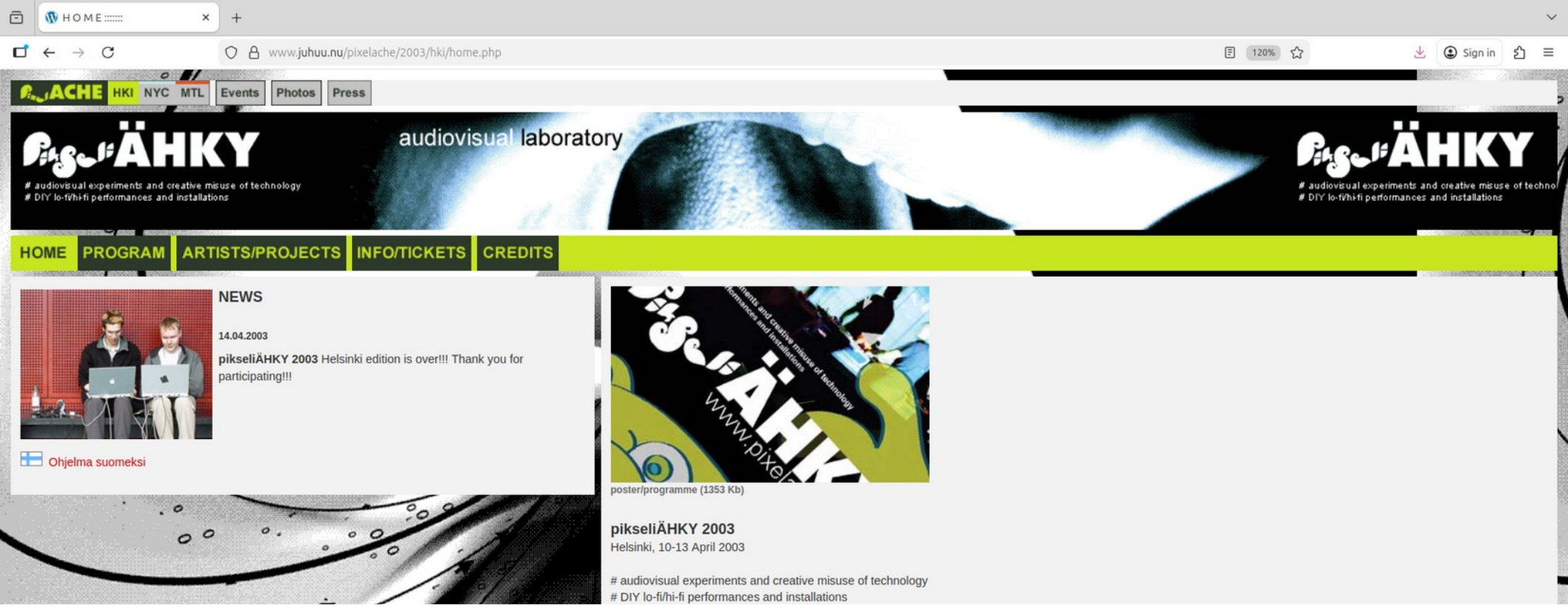


Groups of
Old demoscene friends,
AV artists & designers, Dotcom
Boomers, tinkerers & hackers.
etc.

Came & shared their
Prototypes and/or **their gear**..

First event budget: **200€**

Quiz fact:
The only remaining member from 1st event is our photo-documentor & fellow archivist Antti Ahonen (!)


HOME
www.juhuu.nu/pixelache/2003/hki/home.php
ACHE HKI NYC MTL Events Photos Press
pikseliÄHKY
audiovisual laboratory
audiovisual experiments and creative misuse of technology
DIY lo-fi/hi-fi performances and installations
HOME PROGRAM ARTISTS/PROJECTS INFO/TICKETS CREDITS
NEWS
14.04.2003
pikseliÄHKY 2003 Helsinki edition is over!!! Thank you for participating!!!
Ohjelma suomeksi
poster/programme (1353 Kb)
pikseliÄHKY 2003
Helsinki, 10-13 April 2003
audiovisual experiments and creative misuse of technology
DIY lo-fi/hi-fi performances and installations

Helsinki, 10-13 April 2003

PikseliÄHKY is an international laboratory for creative experimenting with audiovisual technologies. This year's event is built around the theme **VIDEOJUKKA (finnish term for a VJ)** and will bring together a wide range of artists, academics, technology and media wizards and brave young creators. Almost one hundred artist guests from Finland and abroad are going to show up at this year's event!

The main venue for the event is Kiasma, Museum of Contemporary Art. PikseliÄHKY clubs will take place at Mother (Friday 11 April) and Jumo Jazz Club (Saturday 12 April).

PikseliÄHKY // pixelACHE 2003 is a special CHLYK_MINT tour - in addition to Helsinki we will also travel to New York (1-3 June) and Montreal (5-7 June).

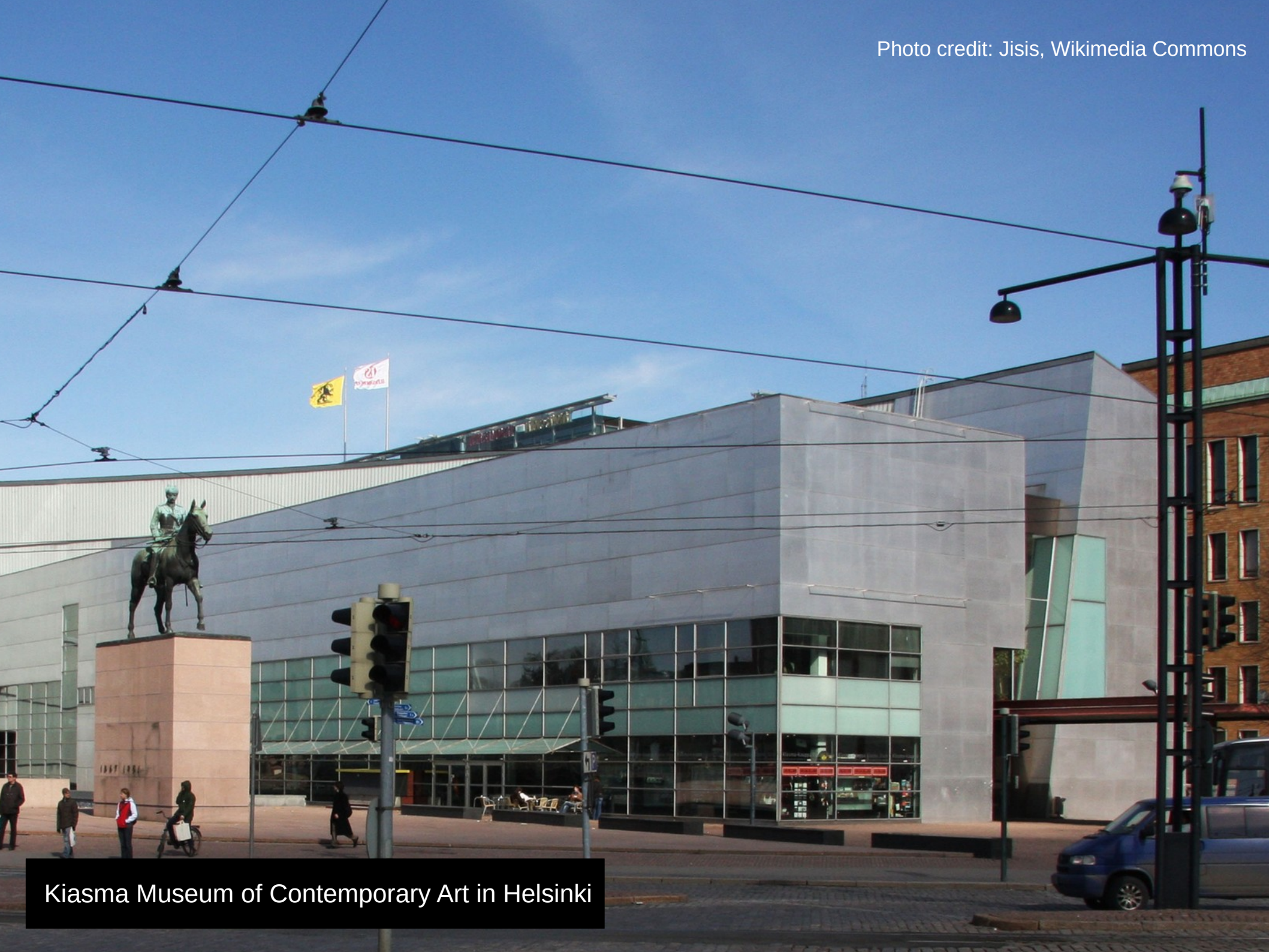


Photo credit: Jisis, Wikimedia Commons

Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki

Photo credit: Anni Koponen

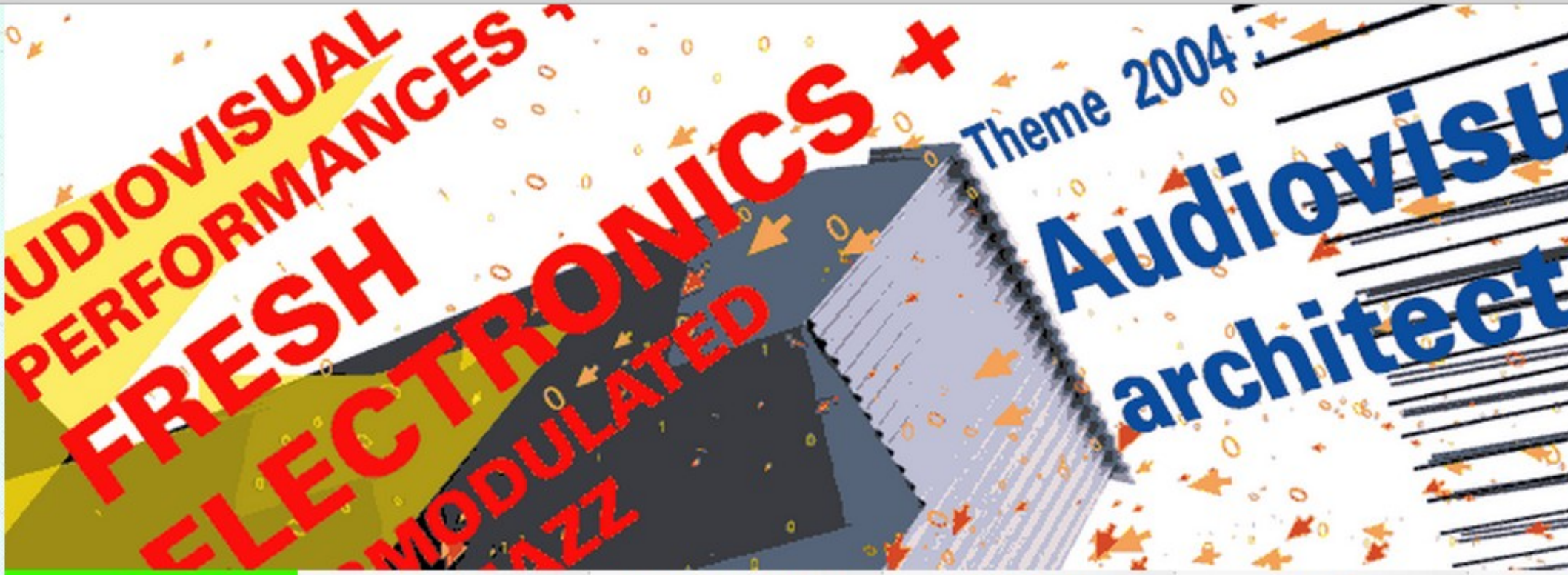
Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

SOLU (Mia Mäkelä) & dj mortenson – Live Performance in Festival 2003

004 / front

www.pixelache.ac/2004/front.php



Front | Program | People / Projects | Info & Tickets | Photos

THEME 2004: AUDIOVISUAL ARCHITECTURE

PixelACHE is an annual festival of electronic art, design and technology. The theme for this year is Audiovisual architecture, experimenting with the border between the digital domain and the physical world.

PixelACHE Festival 2004 goes on for 10 days, starting in Stockholm and continuing in Helsinki.

"PixelA
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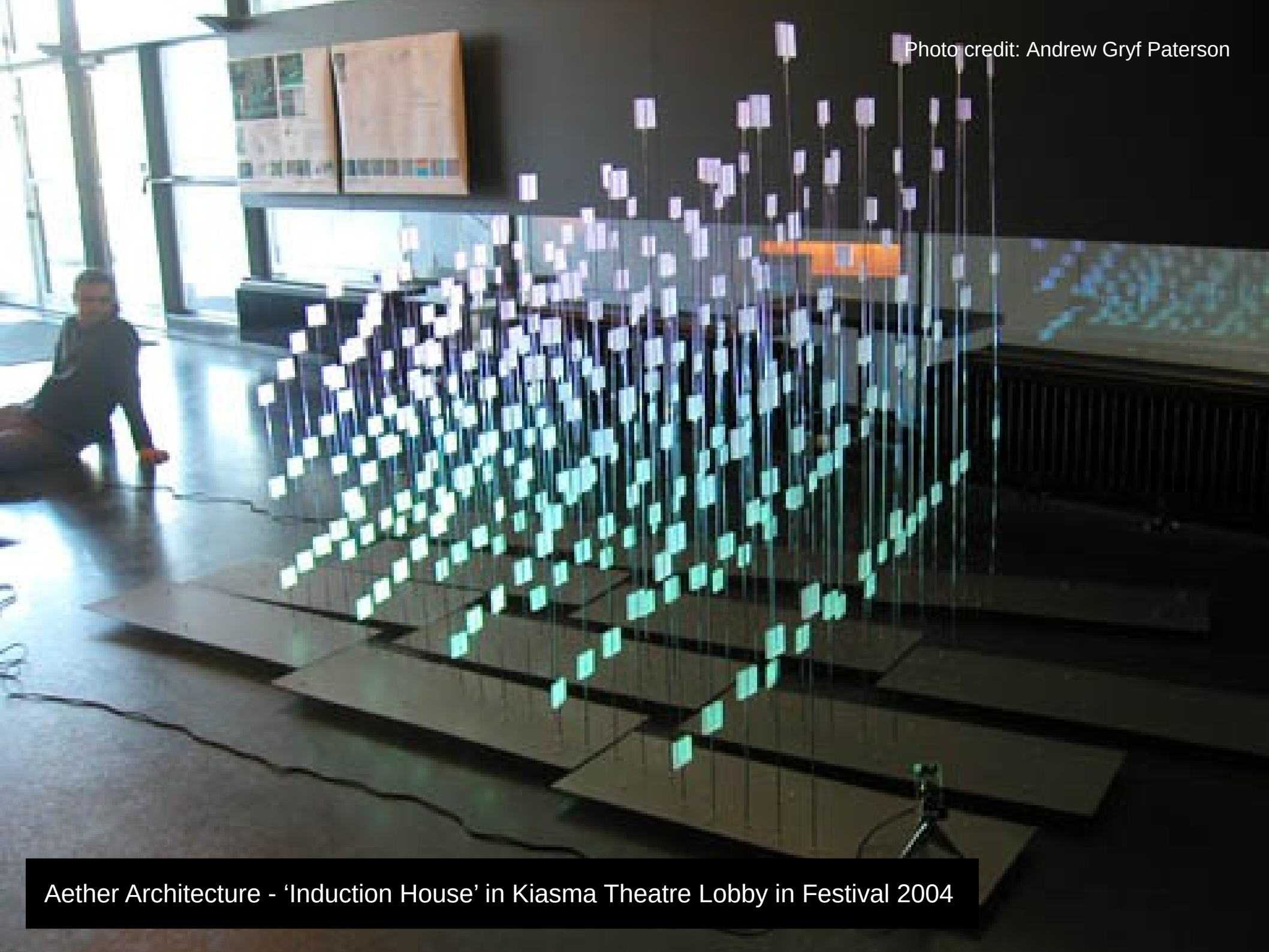
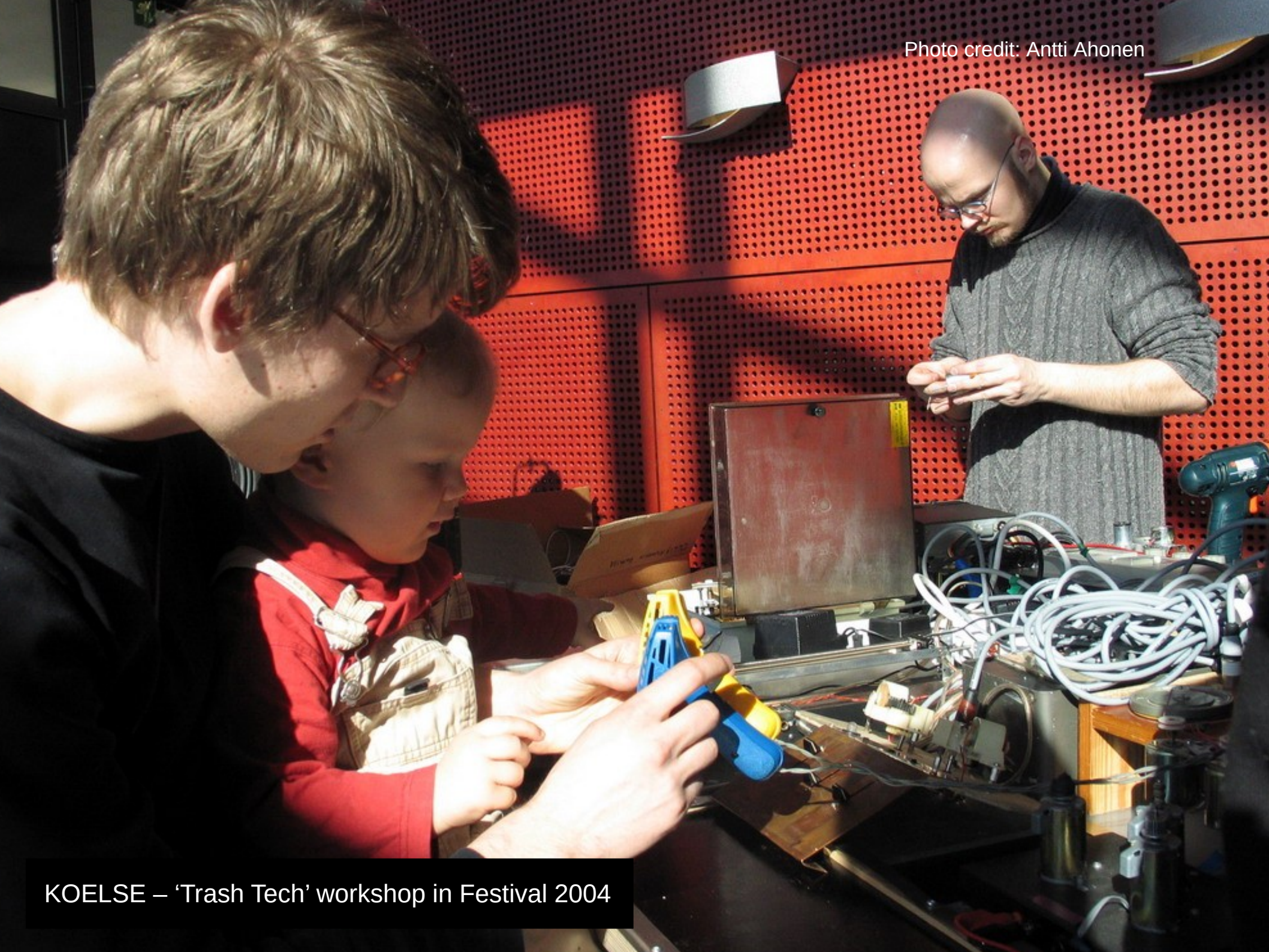
particip



Aether Architecture - ‘Induction House’ in Kiasma Theatre Lobby in Festival 2004

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

‘KOELSE’ Studio in year to be determined ;).. Maybe 2013



KOELSE – ‘Trash Tech’ workshop in Festival 2004

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Xploitec collective – ‘Guerilla VJ Unit’ in Festival 2007

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Erik Minkkinen – ‘Le Placard #10’ (headphone concerts)’ in Festival 2007

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

HEHE – ‘Vihreä pilvi’ (Nuage Vert) produced by Pixelache (Nathalie Aubret & Juha Huuskonen) in 2008

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

KOELSE – ‘Self-sustainable Party Container’ in Festival 2009

Photo credit: Miska Knapek

Bengt Sjölén, Adam Somlai-Fischer & Usman Haque – ‘Wi-fi camera’ in Festival 2009

PIXELACHE

A festival of subcultures

Pixelache offered many **designers, engineers, activists & subculture enthusiasts**

a possibility to present their work for **1st time as 'art' installation or live performance**

PI E£ÅCĻHË

A festival of subcultures

”In the process of making festivals,

Pixelache also formed **long-term symbiotic relationships with experimental designers & collectives,** who presented their projects over various years,

offering **a space for experimental communications projects**.

NB: At the same time the festival was based on project funding

& sponsorship in the mid-2000s by Finland-based ICT companies,

Nokia Corporation &
Sulake, developers of IRC Galleria,
Habbo Hotel, both early massively-populated social media platforms.

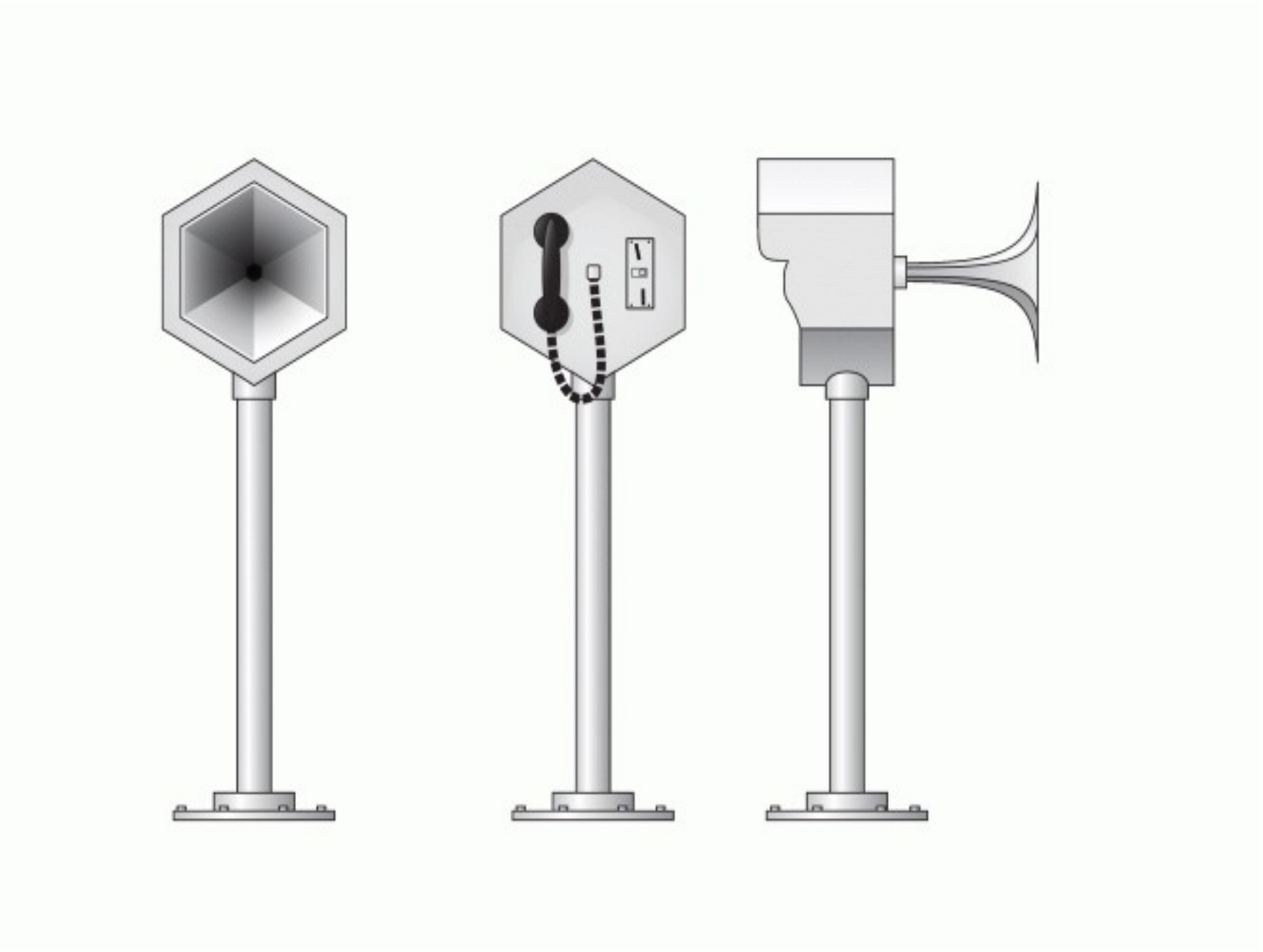
Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Jodi Rose as guest-producer of ‘Particle/Wave’ programme initiated by Sophea Lerner in Festival 2005

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Richard Widerberg presenting ‘IMPROVe’ in ‘Locative Media Workshop’ in Festival 2006

Image: Unsworn



Unsworn Industries presenting ‘Megaphonebooth’ concept in Festival 2010

Photo credit: Linda Vuoma

Unsworn Industries presenting ‘Megaphonebooth’ concept in Festival 2010

PI ⁘ E£ÅCĻË

A festival network of subcultures

”Pixelache started to expand into an international festival network already early on - **2003 festivals in Montreal & New York.. 2004 satellite events in Stockholm.**

These events abroad were realised with 'back-packing' logic - someone would offer the accommodation and the artworks would travel in the luggage.

The festivals were realised as a collaboration between several small media art organisations, a model that was used later on to establish new nodes in the network.

After the year **2005 the network started to become more stable, with some festival nodes running as independent initiatives with their local funding and resources.**”

(Quote from Juha Huuskonen, 2022)

* 2003 – Helsinki, Bergen, New York, Montreal, Bratislava
* 2004 – Helsinki, Bergen, Stockholm
* 2005 – Helsinki, Bergen
* 2006 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Bogotá, San Martino Valle Caudina, San Jose
* 2007 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Stockholm, Medellin & Leticia, New Delhi
* 2008 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Stockholm, Reykjavik, Dakar
* 2009 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Istanbul
* 2010 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Gothenburg, Reykjavik, Dakar
* 2011 – Helsinki, Bergen, Paris, Reykjavik, Bamako, Nantes

Graphic ID: Tuomo Tammenpää

PIXELACHE2011

FESTIVAL OF ELECTRONIC ART & SUBCULTURES

HELSINKI » MARCH 10-13

SUOMENLINNA

Sea Fortress

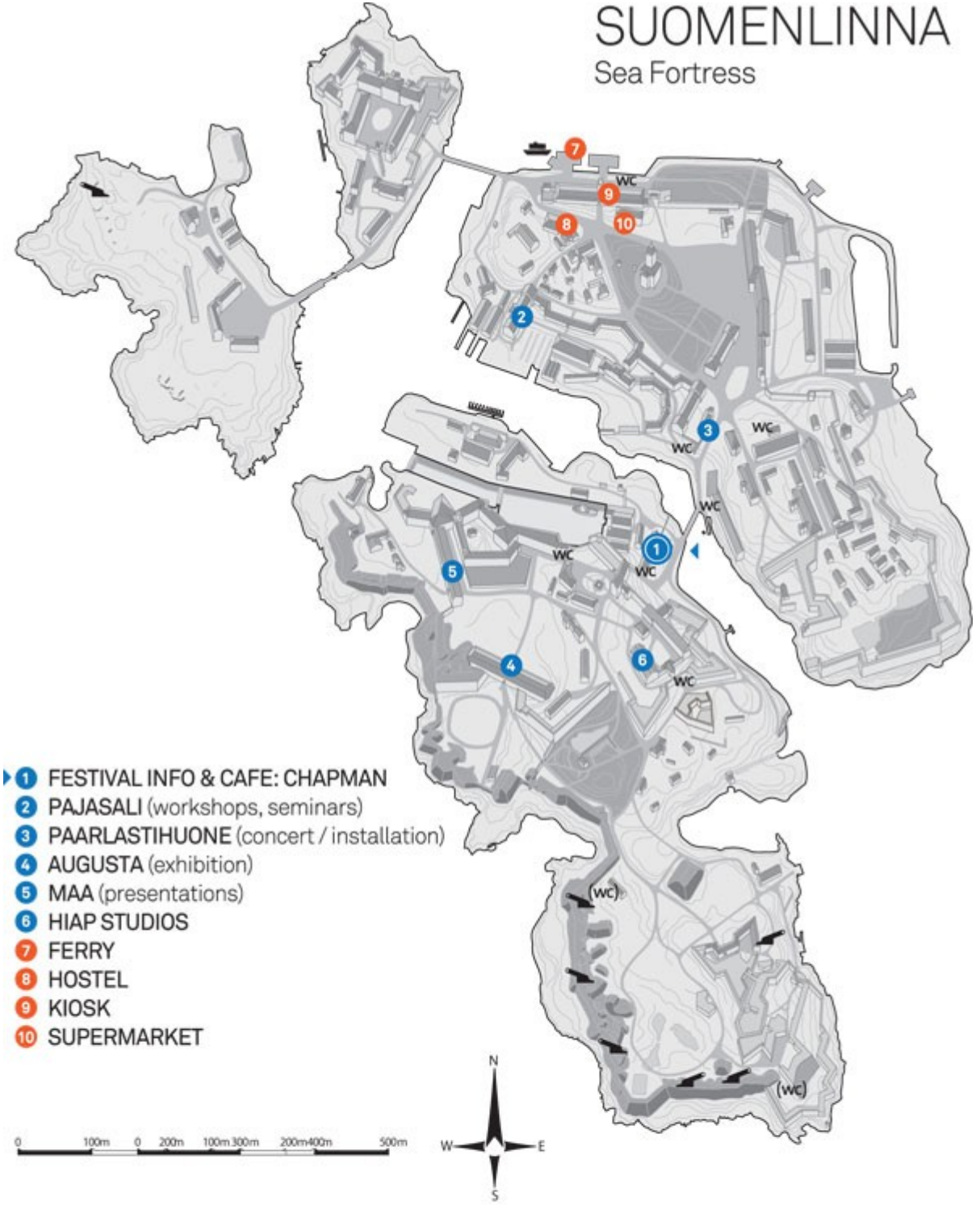


Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Hackteria (Marc Dussieller) – ‘DIY Microscopy’ workshop in Festival 2011

Photo credit: Miska Knapek

Timelab – ‘Mini CNC-kit’ workshop in Festival 2011

‘Kuebiko Outdoor Electronics Lab’ in Pixelversity 2011

Juha Huuskonen leading ‘Camp Pixelache’ day in Festival 2011

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Juha Huuskonen leading ‘Camp Pixelache’ day in Festival 2011

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Photo credit: Jon Irigoyen

Otto Karvonen - ‘Uses and Abuses of Public Space’ in Pixelversity 2011

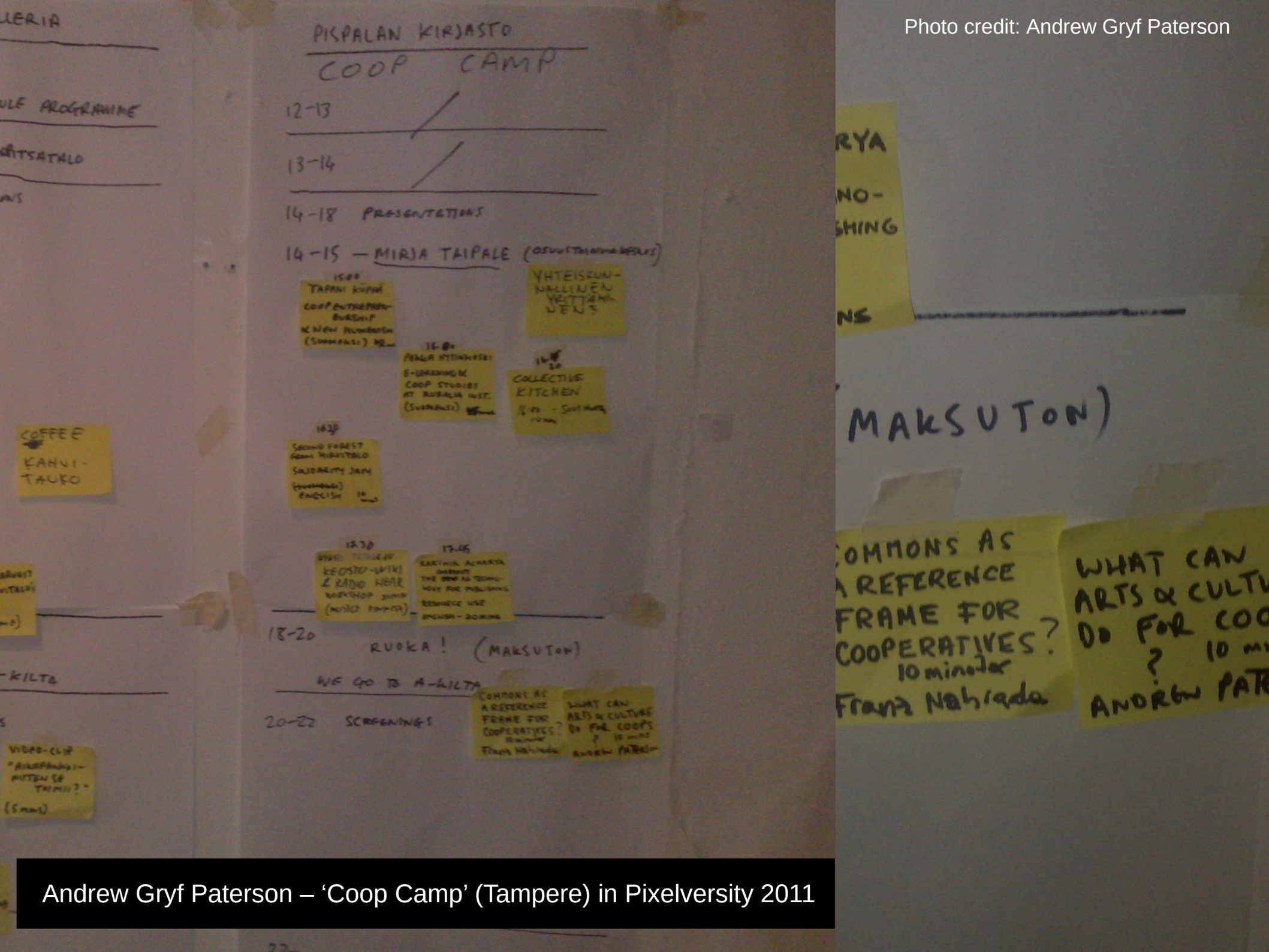


Photo credit: Andrew Gryf Paterson

Andrew Gryf Paterson – ‘Coop Camp’ (Tampere) in Pixelversity 2011

PI E£ÅCĻË

A transdisciplinary platform

While an aesthetic of **digital-material cultures meeting in public space** has been arguably a constant thematic throughout all Pixelache Festivals..

Gradually the festival increasingly extended locally also beyond
the venues of Kiasma [Museum of Contemporary Art] & festival clubs.

The **influence of online participatory platforms**

e.g. Wikipedia, Dorkbot, and internet/hybrid-radio, early social network & locative media

was not only available to media artists and designers, [but] **other creative online citizens** were enabled to promote alternative cultural & knowledge production.

Also an increasing number of international people wished to attend the festival & share their projects.

As a result the **open Camp model emerged from 2010 onwards**
to invite the growing festival community to self-organise contribution.

Different sites and other decentralised Helsinki venues mutually developed thematics, for example local and global North-South relations, urban activism, art & sustainability, commons & decentralised cultural organisation (e.g. Do It With Others).

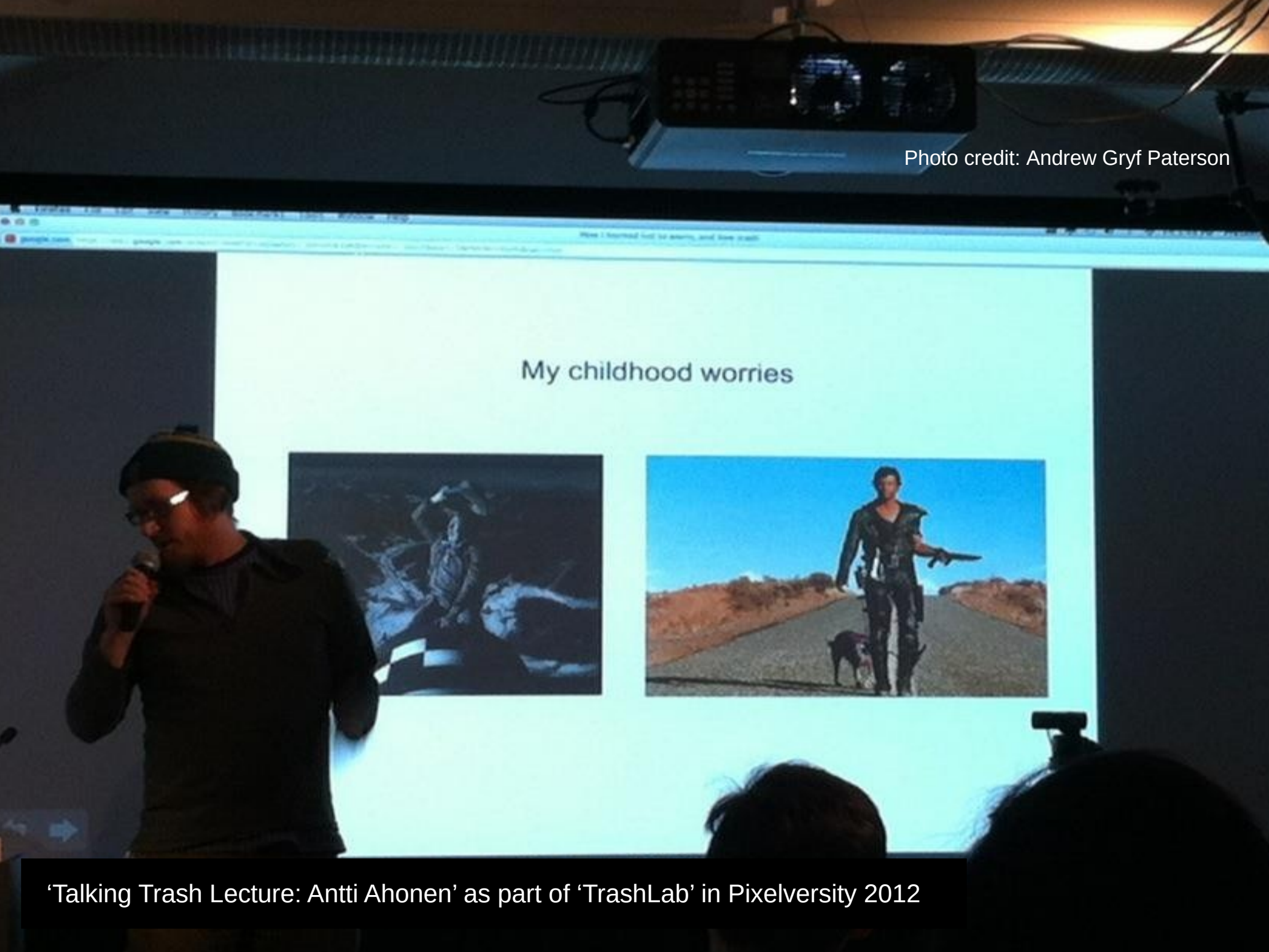


Photo credit: Andrew Gryf Paterson

‘Talking Trash Lecture: Antti Ahonen’ as part of ‘TrashLab’ in Pixelversity 2012

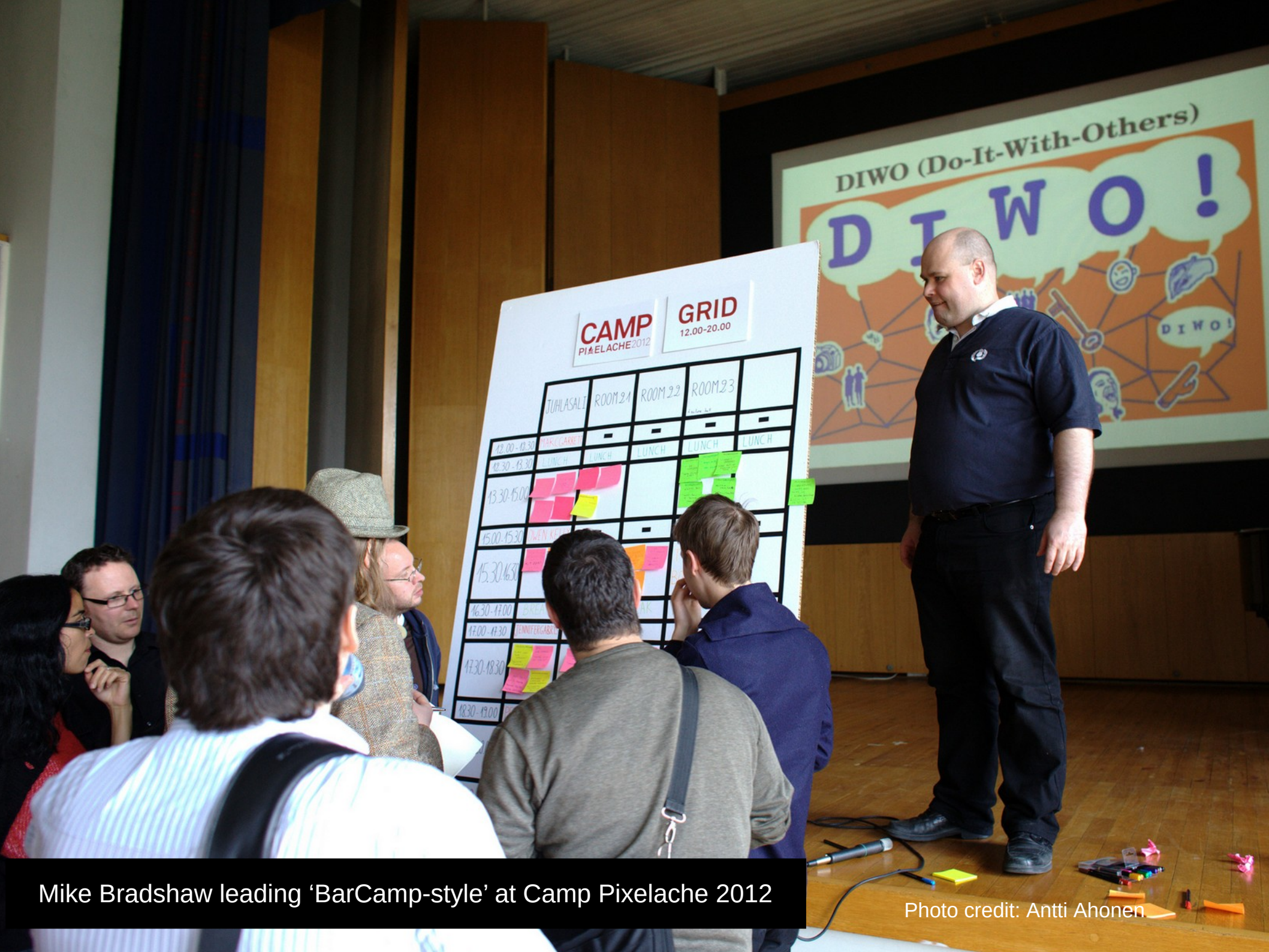
‘Down and Dirty in Polymer’ (Tallinn) as part of ‘TrashLab’ in Pixelversity 2012

‘Repair Café’ as part of ‘TrashLab’ process in 2012

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

‘Waste Management Tours’ as part of ‘TrashLab’ in Pixelversity 2013

Photo credit: Mikko Laajola



Mike Bradshaw leading ‘BarCamp-style’ at Camp Pixelache 2012

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Actually camping at Camp Pixelache 2014

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

KOELSE ‘Space Camp’ at Camp Pixelache 2014

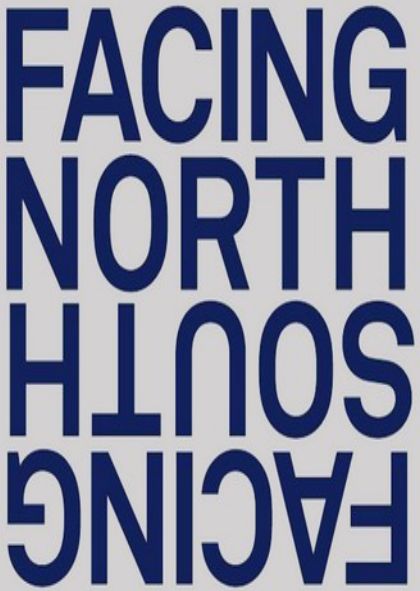
Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Social hangout at Camp Pixelache 2014

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Social hangout at Camp Pixelache 2014

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen



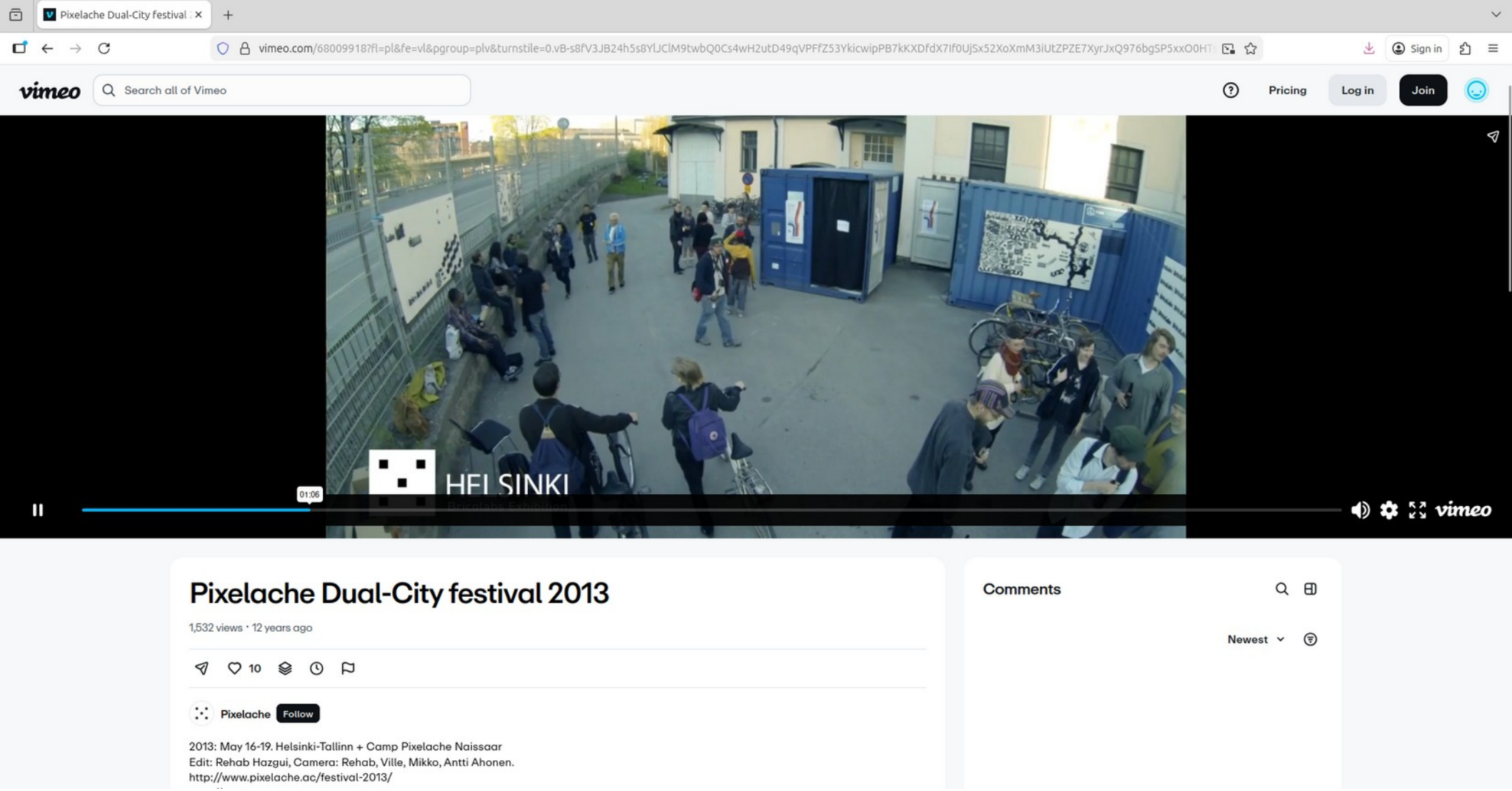
Pixelache Festival 2013: ’Facing North Facing South’ (16-19.5.2013), Helsinki & Tallinn

“Pixelache festival 2013 is entitled ‘Facing North – Facing South’ and is organized as a dual-city event, both in Helsinki and Tallinn during 16-19 May 2013. If every North as its South and every South its North, this is an invitation to alternately face North and South from multiple points of views..

From a regional point of view, organizing part of the festival in Tallinn poses the question of what it means to bring these cultural actions across the water. Indeed, not only geographically, but also economically, Tallinn is still in the South of Helsinki.”

Coordinated by Pixelache members **Nathalie Aubret, Andrew Gryf Paterson, Ville Hyvönen**
Guest curatorship of exhibition & seminar in Helsinki by Bricolabs Network

https://www.pixelache.ac/festivals/festival-2013



https://vimeo.com/68009918

2013: May 16-19. Helsinki-Tallinn + Camp Pixelache Naissaar

Edit: Rehab Hazgui, Camera: Rehab, Ville, Mikko, Antti Ahonen.

PIXELACHE

A transdisciplinary platform

Pixelache offered many **inter- & transdisciplinary persons (artists, activists and emergent practices enthusiasts) beyond the core festival team**

a possibility to share their practice + 'research' interests / communities

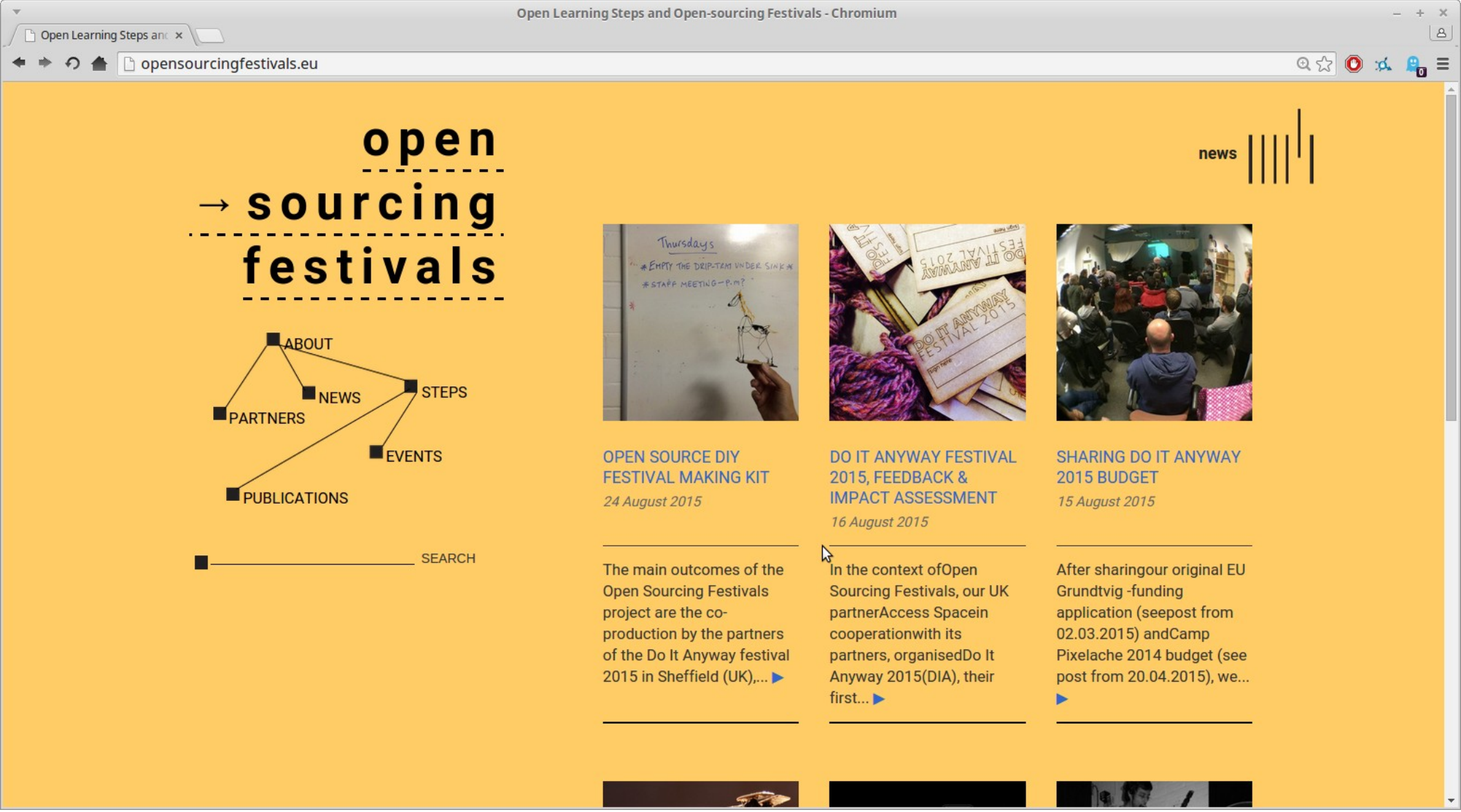
for **1st time within self-organised horizontally curated festival around a particular theme**

Important to note in 2012, Piknik Frequency ry—the association behind Pixelache—

was awarded a substantial activity & operational grant **[i,e. Annual public funds]** by

Finnish Ministry of Education & Culture (OKM) & National State Art Prize for Media Arts

on basis on previous 10 years work.


Open Learning Steps and Open-sourcing Festivals - Chromium
Open Learning Steps and
opensourcingfestivals.eu
open
→ sourcing
festivals
ABOUT
NEWS
STEPS
PARTNERS
EVENTS
PUBLICATIONS
SEARCH
news
OPEN SOURCE DIY FESTIVAL MAKING KIT
24 August 2015
The main outcomes of the Open Sourcing Festivals project are the co-production by the partners of the Do It Anyway festival 2015 in Sheffield (UK),... ▶
DO IT ANYWAY FESTIVAL 2015, FEEDBACK & IMPACT ASSESSMENT
16 August 2015
In the context ofOpen Sourcing Festivals, our UK partnerAccess Spacein cooperationwith its partners, organisedDo It Anyway 2015(DIA), their first... ▶
SHARING DO IT ANYWAY 2015 BUDGET
15 August 2015
After sharingour original EU Grundtvig -funding application (seepost from 02.03.2015) andCamp Pixelache 2014 budget (see post from 20.04.2015), we... ▶

Open Sourcing Festivals and Open Learning Steps **[EU Grundtvig supported]** 2013-2015,

Led by Nathalie Aubret from Pixelache (Helsinki, FI), in cooperation with **Piksel** (Bergen, NO), **Mal au Pixel** (Paris, FR), **Pikslaverk** (Reykjavik, IS) & new network member **Access Space** (Sheffield, EN).

https://olsof.pixelache.ac

A decentralised festival, mini-festivals & collective projects

Pixelache's capacity as a transdisciplinary platform continued to expand in different directions..

Example of 'Foodycle' (2012-2014):

Aimed to **'festivalize' a combination of disciplinary perspectives—art+design+science—around food**. While the early festivals maybe focused on emerging media art & design, Foodycle was "for anyone interested in food issues". We **gained alternative specialization by co-producing** with another association *Ruoan Tuulivaisuus* (The Future of Food)

Example of Festivals 2015-2023

New organisational model of 'co-directors', combined with increased interest in decentralised and collaborative curation, enabled both new & established members to take curatorial leadership to the association. **Each co-director pairing introduced & highlighted new practices,** e.g. embodied & performative art formats on empathy, inclusion & diversity; literature, online radio and podcasting; or activist agendas, e.g. animal- & queer rights

Pixelache Festival 2016: ’Interfaces for Empathy’ (22-25.9.)

“Could empathy be a key to reconnect us with our ecosystem and ourselves? Pixelache Festival 2016 - 'Interfaces for Empathy' explores the promise of this possible societal shift through macro-level direct experiences the perspective of interconnectedness of all life... This year Pixelache Festival’s main venue is the former Lapinlahti hospital area, with Lapinlahden Lähde as a partner organisation. Other festival venues are Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art, MUU Gallery & Helsinki City Winter Garden.”

Co-directed by Pixelache members **Mari Keski-Korsu & Petri Ruikka**
The programing has been supported by Pixelache members & advisory group consisting of artists **Laura Beloff** and **Egle Oddo**, researchers/cognitive scientists **Katri Saarikivi** & **Valtteri Wikström**.

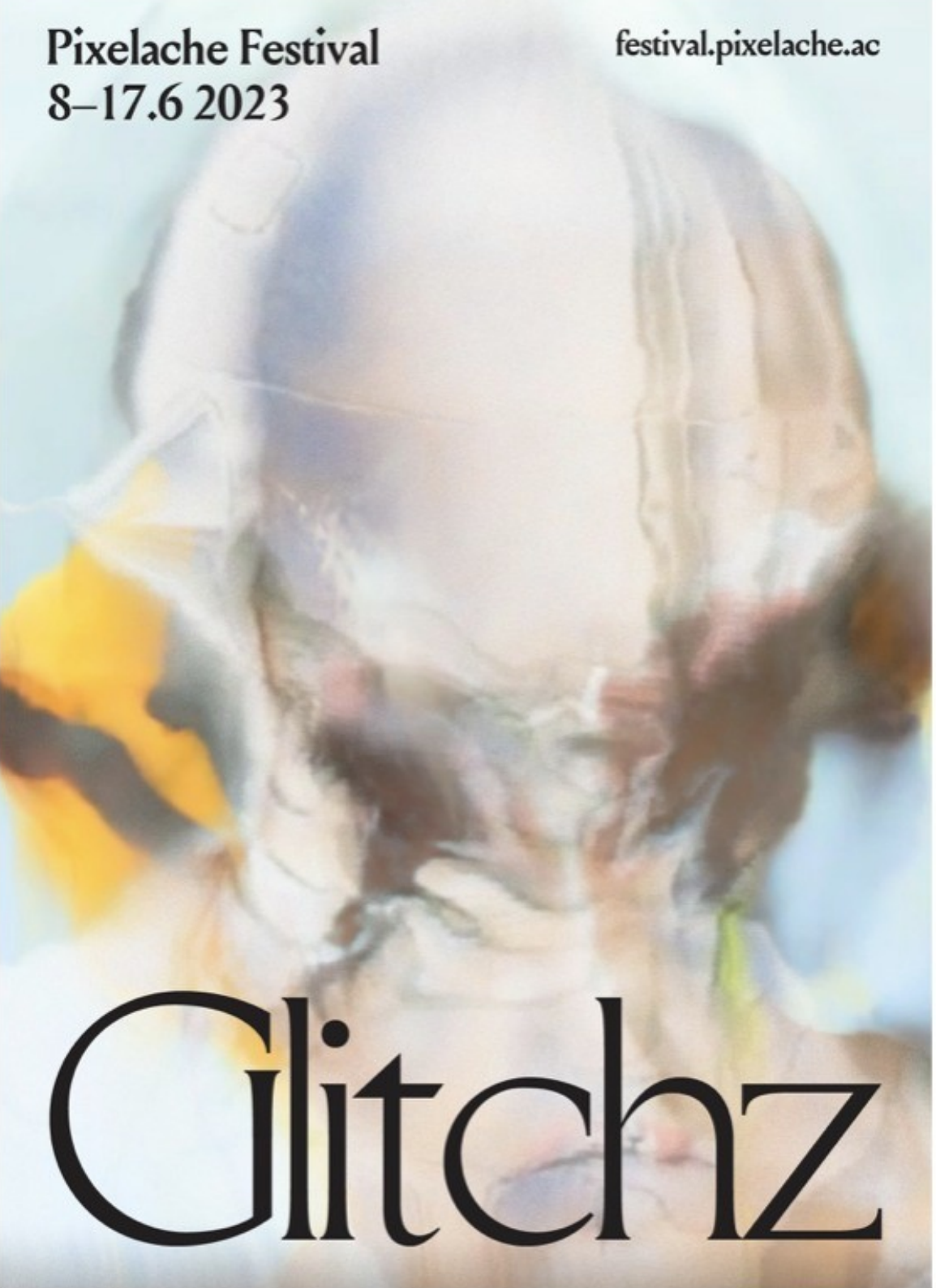
https://empathy.pixelache.ac

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

‘Contacts: 20 Years of Pixelache’ symposium at Kiasma in 2022

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

‘Contacts: 20 Years of Pixelache’ party at Kiasma in 2022



Pixelache Festival 2023: ’Glitchz’ (08-17.6.)

“This year the festival will explore the idea of glitch as possible tactic for resisting oppressive social systems. How can we disrupt the code? The festival will examine this question using artistic strategies and tools; creating through open source, copying, pasting, sharing, distributing, remixing, and sampling.

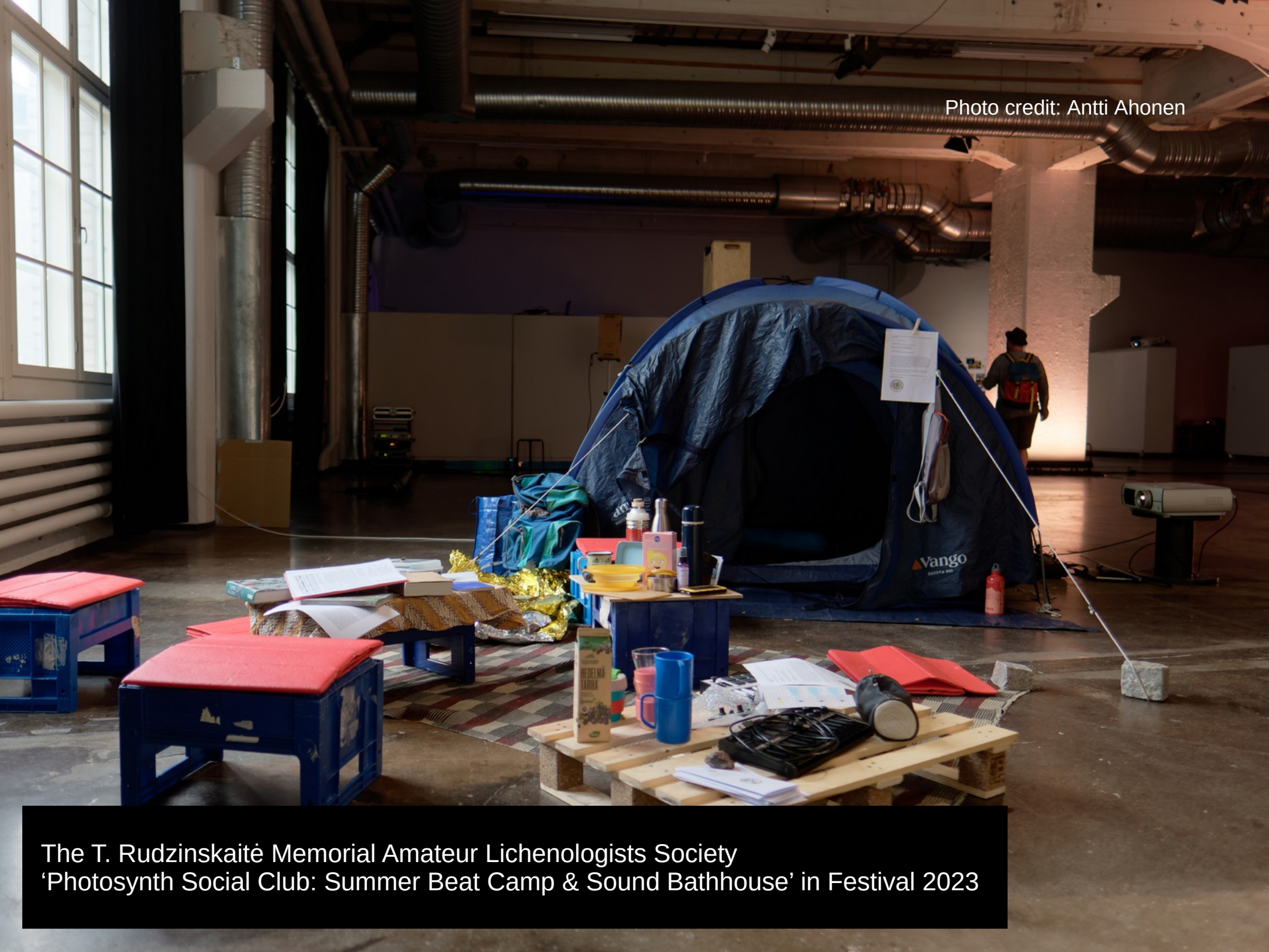
When the system normalizes injustice, the glitch can be a momentary interruption of the normality. The error can dismantle the norm by resisting to accomplish its function or definition. The error and disruption moved by a desire for re-appropriating and subverting the codes. A festival as a situation for experimenting with technologies that can be used to contaminate, mutate or mediate diverse languages and life situations.”

Co-directed & curated by new Pixelache members **Irina Mutt & Soko Hwang | producer: Phan Nguyen**

http://https://glitchz.pixelache.ac

Artistic directors / curators Irina Mutt & Soko Hwang in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen



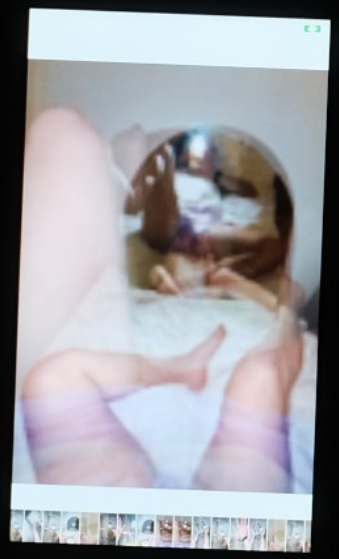
The T. Rudzinskaitė Memorial Amateur Lichenologists Society
‘Photosynth Social Club: Summer Beat Camp & Sound Bathhouse’ in Festival 2023

Egle Oddo – ‘IL Gusto’ in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Social Choreography Lab – ‘Glitch Ritual’ in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen



Nadiye – ‘I Pose’ in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Aya – Live Performance in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

Aya – Live Performance in Festival 2023

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

PI E£ÅCĻHË

A decentralised festival, mini-festivals & collective projects

Pixelache offered many **artists, activists & emergent practices enthusiasts**

a possibility to curate their 'research' interests / communities for **1st time as a festival, mini-festival, or project**

PIXELACHE

Community of Practice

In the **early years Pixelache was about ‘pixels’** - one could expect to see a lot of digital work..

However, **a transition from digital practices to other subjects took place,**

enabled by online participatory platforms, and open curatorial camp or directorial models

that invited the festival community to self-organise contributions.

Alongside these developments,

especially in the **first decade,** an international network of 'sister' events provided
an environment for exchanges,

while in the **second decade**

more **emphasis lay in regional or Helsinki-based collaborations and partnerships**.

PIXELACHE

Community of Practice

Later festivals certainly can be interpreted more on the 'ache' side of the festival's name,

engaging frequently with non-digital interfaces and systems

in socially-engaged and performance-based **works that may have no digital elements**.

Furthermore,

a stronger emphasis was placed on the collective nature of Pixelache as the organisation evolved into **decentralised production groups,**

and **rotating co-directorships took over festival management.**

Community of Practice

According to Etienne Wagner (1998) a ”Community of Practice” is one which

"share[s] a concern or a passion for something they do & learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (Wenger & Traynor-Wagner, 2015)

Consider, briefly, how communities differ from teams:

Teams are created by managers to complete specific projects. Managers select team members on the basis of their ability to contribute to the team’s goals, and the group disbands once the project has been finished.

Communities of practice, on the other hand, **are informal—they organize themselves, meaning they set their own agendas and establish their own leadership.** And membership in a community of practice is self-selected..

Members of an existing community, when they invite someone to join, also **operate on a gut sense of the prospective member’s appropriateness for the group.**" (Wenger and Snyder, 2000)

PI E£ÅCḶË

Communit(y or -ies) of Practice(s)

At its best,

Pixelache Festival is a **community of hybrid & media art practices,**

fostering several generations (maybe 4..)

of emerging practitioners & genres,

inspired originally by an open-source culture & mindset.

While not everyone has followed the same path (even within the generations),

it may be argued that progressive and necessary changes in Finnish society & life

have been regularly emerging at the festivals.

Photo credit: Andrew Gryf Paterson

Photo credit: Antti Ahonen

‘How do we keep going? Transformation in practice’ in 2022

https://pixelache.ac/projects/creatures

PIXELACHE

Communit(y or -ies) of Practice(s)

Pixelache as **Finland's longest running media arts festival**

has **maintained an open-mindedness to emergent changes** in all related festival aspects.

That includes **organisational formats, content presented, software & hardware promoted,**

various participants as contributors, guests and association members,

in an **intersectional mix** of

cultural, gender, technological, national & identity backgrounds..

The festival & association has **aimed to serve as a safer space for demos,**

experiments in content and organisational formats..

Open to even more extravagent propositions,
taking forks from the usual path,

despite all the challenges & contradictions that this endeavour involves.

PI ⁘ E£ÅCḶË

Organisational formats over two decades & more

Reputation for not only **presenting & supporting emerging practitioners** but

also **dynamic / hybrid organisational production formats**

Different ways have existed -more or less- ***through-out*** **history** of Pixelache Festival

* ’Glocal’ (Lange), ’Glocalization’ (Robertson, 1997), developed from Japanese concept *dochakuka* (土着化) meaning adapting to local conditions, developed in 1980s.

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PIXELACHE

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NB: **Gender-parity of participants** achieved in Pixelache Festival **2013**

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E: **Low-fidelity** (ease of participation) → **High-fidelity** → **Hybrid (lo-hi)** → **Low** → **High?**

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H: No (paid) producer → **1 (paid) producer** → **1.5 (paid)** → Many (member) producers → **’No-one’**

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L: **Participatory** events → **Participatory & Audience** events → **Audience** events

謝謝你！　Kiitos！　Thank you！

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In Heidi Tikka, Petri Kuljuntausta, Tytti Rantanen & Minna Tarkka (eds.), ***Suomalaisen mediataiteen ensimmäinen vuosisata -antologia (First 100 Years of Finnish Media Art Anthology)***, Helsinki: Suomen Mediataideverkosto & Parvs kustannus.

produced by MEHI-project consortium – Suomen Mediataideverkosto ry, AV-arkki ry, Mediakulttuuriyhdistys m-cult ry, MUU r.y., Poike Productio Oy, Suomen biotaiteen seura ry ja Suomen valotaiteen seura FLASH ry.

https://parvs.fi/kirja/suomalaisen-mediataiteen-ensimmainen-vuosisata/ | http://media-art-finland.fi

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Mathilde Palenius, Irina Mutt, Saša Nemec, Owen Kelly, Egle Oddo, Antti Ahonen

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